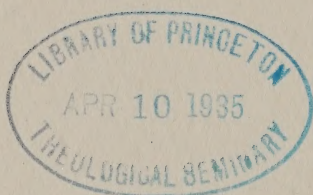


The Bible
as Religion
and
Literature



G. George Fox



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THE BIBLE
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The Bible as Religion and Literature



G. George Fox

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To

MICHAEL STEINDLER

P R E F A C E

In the accumulated culture of civilized man, there is much that is transitory and temporary, and some that is permanent and imperishable. The productions of the mind of man cannot all be of equal value, and cannot all have the same level. However the phenomenon be explained, there is something of a higher character—shall we call it inspirational—that characterizes some of these productions, and makes them impervious to the assaults of time. They seem to have something of the “stuff of eternity”.

It is agreed, I think, among the outstanding thinkers of the larger part of the western world, that many of the documents comprising what the world has come to call the Bible are marked by a loftiness of conception and an exaltation of purpose, that place them among the greatest ethical contributions that we possess. Their matchless appeals to the finer instincts and their singleness of purpose in the direction of a higher-planed humankind, have evoked the admiration of everyone who understands the recurring cry of a sickened humanity for a better and a more abundant life. And no one force has been so powerful to the attuning of the heart—weak as this is — to the sorrowful plaint of suffering and groping man.

There are times when peculiar combinations of human blunders threaten to engulf us into a morass that borders on social jungleism — when we need again to be recalled to the higher level of humane

living—when the trumpet-notes of the clarion voices of the ancient teachers must again bring us back to the consciousness that man is not of the earth alone, but that he is endowed with a spark of divinity that can redeem him from the brutality of selfishness and greed and self-aggrandizement and hatred into which he is sinking.

No more need be said concerning resurgence of brutish conduct at the present time. It is so obvious—so prevalent—that to go into details would be to dignify it. It is sufficient to say, that it is my hope that the publication of these chapters at this time, may be a reminder to those who have forgotten—and a renewed inspiration to those who have not—that the full and abundant life cannot be attained by a negation of justice and social love, mercy and brotherhoodness—and that the old prophetic ideals are still the most luminous paths to social salvation.

This surely cannot be contradicted: The further man gets away from the ethical teachings of the great Biblical teachers — the nearer does he approach the jungle life.

I want to thank Dr. Alexander Dushkin, formerly of the College of Jewish Studies and now of the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, who first suggested the expansion and publication of these lectures; Professor Ira M. Price of the University of Chicago for his interest; Rabbi David Rosenbaum and Mrs. G. George Fox for their assistance; and Mr. Ben Abramson of the Argus Bookshop for his co-operation.

G. George Fox.

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A

BIBLICAL LITERATURE

CHAPTER I

THE BIBLE

I ONCE TRIED AN EXPERIMENT. It was in a group of men and women, all of whom were more or less well read, and among whom there were several college graduates. I asked them to think for a moment, and then give me a definition of the Bible. I asked them to answer as simply as they could, the question "What is the Bible?" There was some thought, and then I got a variety of replies. Some said that it was a history of the ancient Jews. Some said that it contained the Laws of Israel. Others said that it was a book containing the philosophy of the ancient Hebrews. Still others ventured the thought that it was a religious manual as well as hymnal of the ancient Jews. Others could give no particular definition but knew it was a work about the ancient Jews, and had something to do with their religion.

If that same question were put to many readers of these pages, the answers would perhaps not vary greatly. People have a vague idea of the Bible, but very few have any definite notions about it. The Bible is taken for granted—but few have so intimate an acquaintance with it, that they can give an intelligent and inclusive idea of what it is. Yet it is the most

popular book in all the world. It is the most important book that civilization knows of. When I speak of the Bible in these words, I have in mind both the Old and the New Testaments. It is the "best seller" in the world, and its editions have reached almost incredible figures.

At the 116th annual meeting of the American Bible Society held in New York in 1933, it was reported that that organization alone had issued during the year 1932, 8,067,156 copies; that in all the years of its existence that Society had issued 246,046,560 copies, and that the Bible or parts of it had been translated into some 182 different languages and dialects! Last year more than 112 million were distributed, and Old and New Testament books were published in 936 different tongues. It is then no ordinary book that we are dealing with. And that is the record of the American Bible Society alone. Besides this organization there are several great Bible Societies in Europe, and it is doubtful if it is possible to get anywhere near the exact figures of either the number of copies issued, or the languages and dialects in which it has been printed. There is no land and there is no well-known language without the Bible or parts of it.

We shall confine ourselves in these pages to the Old Testament, that is, the Jewish Bible and references will be made to that work alone.

The word "Bible" comes to us through the Latin word "biblia", which in turn is taken over from the Greek "biblia" meaning "little books". The word biblia, again, is derived from the Greek "byblus" which is synonymous with "papyrus", the name of

the material upon which books were written by the ancients, and the same word from which our modern "paper" is derived. The word "biblia" is a plural form, but is regarded as singular, and shows us that the Bible is regarded as a single work composed of many books.

Professor H. L. Willett in his "The Bible Through the Centuries," states that "Bible" came from the town of Byblos on the coast of Syria, from which quantities of papyrus were brought to the Greek cities of the West for the use of writers.

The great work did not come down to us as a ready-made volume. Nor was it all composed at one time. It took centuries for it to develop, and the work was not completed until the second or third century of the Christian era. Josephus says that the number of books was virtually fixed around the end of the first century of the present era. Yet we know that Rabbi Samuel objected to the inclusion of the Book of Esther, and he lived in the third century of the Christian era. We can reasonably assume that the Bible was complete as we know it, about the second century and that an objection here and there did not alter the situation. The Book of Esther was not the only book against which objections were raised. Similar controversies took place with regard to the books of Ezekiel, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and the Song of Songs. There were even two Apocryphal books, Ecclesiasticus or Ben Sirach and Baruch, that the Talmud mentions as being included in the "Canon"—another name for the Scriptures; but popular opinion was evidently against these, and the rabbis did not include them in the Holy Writings.

The Bible is divided into three parts*, the Torah, or the Five Books of Moses, called also the Pentateuch, from the Greek meaning the "Five Books"; the Nebiim or Prophets; and the Kethubim or Holy Writings, also called the Hagiography from the Greek. The Five Books or the Torah consist of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Genesis treats of the creation of the world, of the fall of man, the flood, the call of Abraham and the beginnings of Hebrew tradition, the wanderings of the early Hebrew fathers, and the settlement in Egypt under Joseph. Exodus treats of the slavery of the Hebrews, the birth and rise of Moses, the freeing of Israel from the Egyptian yoke, the journeyings thru the Wilderness, and the erection of the Tabernacle, and presents a number of laws, among them the Ten Commandments and various other statutes and ordinances. Leviticus contains mostly laws—priestly and also other kinds, and emphasizes the quality of holiness that Israel must assume because of its God. Numbers deals largely with the census and wanderings of Israel, the consecration of Aaron and his sons to the priesthood, the wars during the wanderings and the story of Baalam; it mentions various laws and also the death of Aaron. Deuteronomy is a record of the last month of the Forty Years wanderings and a repetition to some extent of what has gone before, with new laws, a restating of the Ten Commandments with some changes, and an account of the appointment of Joshua, the death of Moses, and exhortations pleading for the obeying of

* In these discussions I have followed the order of the Biblical Books, as it has come down to us in the Jewish tradition. The order of the Books in the Christian tradition, differs.

these laws. All of the Five Books have some laws, and some of these are repeated two or three times. The Torah has always been regarded by tradition as the most sacred part of the Bible because of its allegedly divine laws.

The Prophets or Prophetic Books are divided into two parts; the Earlier and the Latter. The Earlier or Former consist of the Books of Joshua, Judges, First and Second Samuel, and First and Second Kings. Joshua treats of the Conquest of Canaan and its Settlement under the successor of Moses; Judges treats of the wars fought under the leadership of these heroes, and the attempts made to unite the different tribes. The Books of Samuel treat of the rise of Samuel, of the establishment of the Kingdom by him under Saul and David, and of the strengthening of the kingdom under that heroic king. The Books of Kings treat of the growth of the Kingdom of Solomon and his successors, of the division of the Kingdom under Rehoboam, and the Fall of both the Northern and the Southern Kingdoms, in 721 and 586, respectively, and of the inhabitants being carried into Exile.

The Latter Prophets are further divided into two parts; the Major Prophets and the Minor. The Major Prophets consist of the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah and Ezekiel; and the Minor of the works of Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. All of these books represent traditionally the words of the prophets after whom they are called.

The third part of the Bible, or the Kethubim, consists of the Psalms, traditionally credited to David;

Proverbs, assigned by tradition to Solomon; Job, by tradition assigned to Moses; Song of Songs assigned to Solomon; Ruth to Samuel; Lamentations to Jeremiah; Ecclesiastes to Solomon, and Esther to the Men of the Great Synagogue; these last are also known as the Five Megilloth and are read on various sacred days. The Song of Songs is read on Passover; Ruth is read on Pentacost or Shabuoth, while Lamentations is read on the Ninth Day of Ab—the anniversary of the destruction of the Temple. The Book of Ecclesiastes is read on Tabernacles or Succoth, and Esther on Purim, or the Feast of Esther. Then comes the Book of Daniel, assigned by tradition to the Men of the Great Synagogue; then Ezra and Nehemiah who wrote their own books, and Chronicles, assigned in part also to Ezra. These authorships are not accepted by critical scholars today tho they are accepted by traditionalists, as noted above.

Biblical criticism today asserts that the Five Books were not written by Moses; that the oldest portions of the Pentateuch are Chapters 34, 17-26 and 21-23 of the Book of Exodus—the Ten Commandments occur in Chapter 20—, and Chapters 12-26 of the Book of Deuteronomy; that this last document was found in the Temple about 621 B. C. E., and that it was the first accepted Book of Law; that much of the Torah was written during the Exile, 586-536, by the prophet Ezekiel and his Priestly School, and that the Torah mentioned by Ezra was probably that body of writings now encompassed in the Five Books brought back by him from Persia about 444 or as some prefer, 397 before the present era. The Book of

Joshua as well as Judges, Samuel and Kings was probably written before the Exile, while the latter prophetic books were written before, during and after the period of the Exile. The Book of Isaiah is divided into two main parts, that of Chapters, 1-39, being accredited for the major part to Isaiah of Jerusalem: while Chapters 40-66, in the major part, to an unnamed prophet, but called for convenience sake Isaiah of Babylon. Much of the biblical material was carried into the Exile, but the books in their present form were finally edited after that event. So also with many of the Psalms and the Holy Writings. The Book of Daniel is regarded as the latest of the Books and placed at between 168-165 before the present era. Roughly speaking, the dates of the completion of the Torah are given at 400 before the Christian era, that of the Prophets at about 100 before, and that of the Holy Writings at about 100 after. The development of the Jewish Bible therefore, covers a period of more than 800 years—from the time of the acceptance of Deuteronomy, until the close of the Holy Writings.

The most important translation of the Bible is that made into Greek, under Ptolemy (II) Philadelphus, 285-247 B. C. E. It is said to have been made by seventy-two scholars in as many days, under orders from the king, for his Jewish subjects who were no longer acquainted with Hebrew well enough to understand the Scriptures in the original. The legend connected with this translation, which is called the Septuagint, relates that Demetrius, the librarian of Ptolemy persuaded him to send an embassy to Eleazar the High Priest, and request him to appoint a com-

mission of scholars to translate the Bible from the Hebrew into the vernacular Greek. Eleazar appointed six scholars from each of the tribes, a total of seventy-two, and carrying with them a copy of the Bible in letters of gold, they retired to the Island of Pharos, where they produced their translation—called from their number, The Septuagint. This translation in Hellenistic Greek, shows a number of variants from the Hebrew. It was extensively used in the Greek communities in ancient times, and is still the official version of the Greek section of the Catholic Church.

An early Bible paraphrase of importance is that of the Aramaic or Targumic, about the end of the first century or the beginning of the second. This paraphrase was said to be based largely on a very exact Greek translation by Aquila, a convert from Christianity to Judaism, who knew both Greek and Hebrew thoroughly, and it was called Targum Onkelos. Other Targumic paraphrases of parts of the Bible were also made at this time. These Aramaic or Targumic paraphrases had become necessary because of the supersession of Aramaic over Hebrew as the common everyday language.

The most important of the translations into Latin was that of Jerome, in the latter part of the 4th Century. This is called the Vulgate, and is the basis of the Douai or Catholic Bible. The first English version was that of Wyclif about 1384. In 1536 Coverdale completed his version. In 1560 the Geneva Bible saw the light of day. In 1611, the famous King James version was completed. In 1881 there appeared an American revised version, and in 1931, the latest of the transla-

tions in English, known as The American Translation, under Professors J. M. P. Smith and Edgar J. Goodspeed. The first authentic German translation was made by Luther in 1530; a number of Jewish scholars have followed in his footsteps—Mendelssohn, Zunz, and Phillipsohn. Mendelssohn's translation is not complete. Cahen and Munk made translations into French, and a translation into English from the Jewish point of view was made by Leeser in the United States in 1853. The version commonly used by Jews in the English speaking world now, is that published by the Jewish Publication Society of America, and done by a group of American Jewish scholars and rabbis.

The Bible consists of thirty-nine books, and if Samuel I and II, Kings I and II and Chronicles I and II, each be considered one book which they really are, there are thirty-six. Each one of these differs from the other in several or sometimes in many respects. Not only in form and content do they differ, but often in point of view itself; one finds many points of divergence in the Bible, many points of view—often contradictory points of view; as noted, there were even objections to including some of these views in the Holy Collection. There are books which contain largely the history of the people at a certain period; there are those which are given over largely to legislation; there are those that are given largely to prophetic exhortation and ethical preaching; there are those that are given over to homely wisdom and daily advice; there are those given over to poetry and song and praise; there is philosophic speculation in the form of dramatic dialogue, and one finds in the Bible the

finest type of oratory. There are folk tales and meditations, fables and parables, phillipics and prophecies. And they cover a period in time of some 35 centuries according to legend—and of more than 12 centuries of known history. Some of the Books of the Bible were almost complete at the time of the Exile—so that literary activity of Biblical writers covers a period of at least eight centuries. And while most of the Books are written in Hebrew, there are Aramaisms in at least ten of them—and all but six chapters of Daniel is in Aramaic. In other words—the Bible is a great collection of the monuments of ancient Israel, containing that literature which was extant from its beginnings until the time of the Great Synagog—written largely in Hebrew, and presenting in this collection, Israel's contribution from its beginnings until the Maccabean Era. It is the primary source of what later developed into Judaism, tho it is itself, the creation of the history of the Hebrews before and during the Exile.

There is no single source of religious inspiration which can be compared to the Bible. It is by all odds the most important factor in the growth of what we call Western Civilization. Its influence extends into every corner of the known world—and more than a third of mankind looks to it as the fountain of religious inspiration. If our allegations about a high ethical civilization are correct; if we really have a view that is superior to that of non-Jewish-Christian peoples; if there is in our mode of life a social point of view higher than that of peoples who have other scriptures, then whatever difference we have—one need not speak

of this chauvinistically as "superiority"—is due to the influence of the Bible—the New as well as the Old Testament.

The Old Testament religion, with some accretions of the oral traditions that grew from and around it—the Mishna and the Talmud—gave birth to Christianity; and from both of these sprang Islam. So that even this great religion is not without the influence of our Scriptures; indeed, its monotheism, many of its festivals and customs, and much of its social gospel are rooted in the Old Testament. It cannot be gainsaid that the Bible has influenced more people for a longer time than any other Scripture.

It is plain that when we speak of the Bible, we are dealing with a collection that reflects dissimilar points of view, unlike historical epochs, different types of environment, conflicting opinions and personalities, multifarious kinds of thought, and sometimes opposing teachings and points of view. Yet a kind of unity pervades the whole collection; one finds in it a definite purpose; there is a uniting element in it, in spite of the "pulling away" of some parts; there is a distinct trend and tempo in all the variations—there is a unity in all of this multiplicity, just as there is a multiplicity in its unity. The Bible is the pattern of life evolving from the lower to the higher, set in the frame of human experience. If one could symbolize the Bible by a Magen David—the six pointed Star of David, the topmost point would indicate the Fatherhood of God; the point opposite that, the Brotherhood of Man; the point to the left of the first point would indicate the Task or Mission of Israel, and the point opposite that,

the Messianic age; the point below that, Individual Righteousness, or Social Justice (or as Professor Foster preferred to term it, Social Love) and the point opposite that, would indicate Peace.

We shall meet if we study this great treasury, early nomadic life with its simplicity and artlessness; Abraham and his shepherds; the washing of feet; the meetings with the angels; the commerce with concubines; the musical accompaniments to the ecstasies of the seers; miraculous conception at the age of ninety; miracles that amuse as well as puzzle, and many other elements of an early and believing age. We shall meet with people who seem to us like children, and yet others whom modern religious genius has not approached. We shall meet childish conceptions of Deity—and then others so grand that the average “civilized” mind cannot grasp them. We shall meet the Jewish people at its beginnings, and travel with it thru its nomadic, agricultural, commercial, military and religious life, until it reaches the level of a great nation, breaks in two, and finally is smothered by greater and more powerful ones. We shall be able to see a gradual evolution from a simple wandering tribe of nomads, into a people whose cultural attainments were as high as the highest, whose religious ideals have never been surpassed, whose jealousies brought on their ruin, and whose social teachings, in spite of exile and oppression and destruction, are still the foundation of modern social and ethical ideals.

It is almost an inconceivable phenomenon, that after these thousands of years, the Bible—the Old and the New Testaments—remains still the fountain-head

of religious inspiration. Its healing waters flow into the souls of hundreds of millions; and no matter what one's personal attitude be, the world as a whole regards the Sacred Scriptures as the perennial source of religious values, religious inspiration and religious teachings—as well as the perennial answer to religious queries, doubts and yearnings. There are those who think that all of this is due to human stupidity and the lack of ordinary intelligence; the vast army of mankind believes, however, that these are wrong, and that the influence of the Bible is due to its intrinsic worth as a document containing the highest ethical knowledge that has been vouchsafed to man, as well as the greatest examples of individual consecration and religious fervor.

B

THE BIBLE AS A SOURCE OF RELIGION

CHAPTER II

THE GOD IDEA

IN TREATING THE BIBLE as a source of Religion, I shall not burden the reader with a lengthy discussion on the meaning and significance of the word "religion." I believe that we can come to some agreement which will satisfy us so that we can have a common understanding of its meaning—a common denominator so to speak, of the basic elements in its many definitions. I think that all of us will agree that there must be two fundamental ideas included in any working definition of the word, namely: that which is supernatural and sacred, and that which is social and ethical. Let us say then, that by religion we mean that power or feeling or attitude towards the universe which accepts the existence of God, on the one hand, and thru the acceptance of this ideal, impels the shaping of one's conduct so that it has a positive social value and an ethical meaning. In other words, religion means faith in God and a will to act in accordance with what is believed to be His desire; that is, to live up to the highest and noblest ideals of human behavior, with faith in an eternal God.

The value of the one-God idea has been vindicated by the researches of modern science. A plurality of

gods is almost unthinkable to the modern mind. To assume that there is more than one god, is to introduce a divisiveness into the universe which separates it into different realms and departments supervised by various deities as were the worlds of the Babylonians, Assyrians, Greeks and Romans. To have a god of the heavens like Marduk or Zeus, a god of the sea like Neptune, a goddess of fertility like Ishtar, a god of the world like Horus or Osiris of the underworld—all of these conceptions seem childish and impossible to us—and I think they are. We are accustomed, under the insistence of scientific thought, to think of the world as a unity, in so far as science can give us any light; for us, a single God-idea points to a cosmos of system and order. The verdict of science will not permit us, as reasoning beings, to assume the existence of a plurality of gods. The researches of modern scientists among whom a few only need be mentioned—Newton and before him Bacon, Huygens, Maxwell, Haldane, Thomson, Einstein, Millikan and Compton, give hints of more than only a cosmic unity. True enough, they do not believe in the same conception of the Deity as did the biblical teachers, but by no strain of interpretation can these investigators be made to imply the existence of a large or for that matter, small number of gods, as the ancients believed. Nor do any of these deny the existence of what has generally been called God.

In his "Watchers of the Sky," the poet Noyes writing on Newton, gives us the following lines:

This Universe
Exists and by that one impassable fact
Declares itself a miracle, postulates
An infinite power within itself, a Whole
Greater than any part, a Unity,
Sustaining all, binding all worlds in one,
This is the mystery, palpable here and now.

It would be foolhardy to attempt in this day and age to say that the concept of God revealed to Biblical writers is precisely the same that we hold today. Surely no person who is in the least familiar with modern thought would conceive of God as taking a stroll in the Garden of Eden and holding a conversation with Adam. I have no hesitancy in saying that no modern man can believe that the Lord actually wrote the Ten Commandments. Not even the grand idea of Amos's God can be made to fit exactly into the theism of modern science. But fundamentally the one-God teaching of Israel's prophets is the same as that which the best thought of our days accepts, and therein lies one of the great values of the Bible as a source of religious teaching.

As a matter of fact the idea of Deity finds different conceptions today among men of science. And I stress the scientific element in our attitude towards religion, because we have been accustomed to look to science for ultimate authority since the age of miracles and visions has passed, and the age of scientific investigations has come. We are accustomed to believe that even if science can't prove things, it can demonstrate them more truthfully and realistically than

pure emotional reactions, tho we dare not under the newer development of psychology, underestimate the place of emotions in religious thinking and practice. We believe in science as against miracle because we have learned to reason logically, and to appreciate scientific demonstrations which have a concrete basis, and are backed up by actual proofs which were unknown as well as impossible to the ancients. Things still happen for which we cannot account—but we have learned much about the universe thru experiment and thru the numerous facilities for experimentation which the fertility of the scientific mind has produced. Eddington has one idea of God; Millikan, another; Einstein, a third—but all agree upon a fundamental unity. I suppose that as a matter-of-fact there are as many different conceptions of God as there are thinking beings who are able to conceive of a God.

Of course, the method by which the teachers of Israel arrived at their faith in God, and that of science, is different. The prophets felt their God—it came to them by a sort of intuition. They neither reasoned out his existence nor tried to arrive at it thru experiment and research. They knew nothing about the philosophic or scientific method. Their God, we say, revealed Himself to them. In moments of deep thought or ecstasy they communed with Him, and the fact that this for them actually took place, was proof enough. There are many people today who accept the knowledge of God in the same way. The deeply pious individual whose religious life is determined by his feelings and emotions does not look to the scientist for any information about the Deity. He

gets it inwardly, emotionally and mystically. God reveals Himself to that particular individual—and this revelation is often the basis of the religion of a whole group of saints—Christian and Jewish. For there are many Jewish saints—tho not canonized by Judaism which has no place for canonization in its philosophy,—who spoke to their God and communed with Him and felt His presence in their lives, just as did the Christian saints.

The Bible is among other things, a record of the revelation of God to those who were so temperamentally and emotionally equipped that they could be the subject of revelation. For the great teachers of Judaism—especially those in our sacred writings, were not scientific investigators, research experts or philosophic thinkers. There was no Plato among them, nor a Maimonides, nor a Spinoza, nor a Kant, nor a Whitehead. They were essentially men of God in the pietistic and emotional sense—and yet thru that intuition, were they able to arrive at levels of ethical ideals that have never been surpassed. Their God-idea is historically and religiously the ancestor of ours, and whatever that idea has meant to the millions who have had it, lived by it and profited by it, should be regarded as their unique contribution.

The presentation of the idea of God by those ancients is set among a simple people. Their civilization could neither understand nor support an idea of the Deity that is suitable to modern life. If theirs to some extent was a God of moods and temperaments—a God of wrath, yet justice, of jealousy, yet holiness, he was also a God who was a Father, benign King, and

bountiful Creator. He was the father of all men, and tho He looked to Israel for the fulfillment of its promises, "He was slow to anger, long suffering and great in mercy." We do not—or better perhaps, they who think out their God idea, do not believe in a moody and temperamental God; in One who makes a contract, so to speak, with his worshippers, and One who loves one people or one group more than another. We have outgrown the anthropomorphism and anthropopathism—the human form and the human-feeling elements of many of the biblical God-representations; many of us have outgrown the conception that teaches that God will reward us with a return to Heaven if we are good, and with eternal damnation in a lake of sulphurous fire if we are bad. But the basic idea of a Unity in the cosmos or universe, we have not outgrown; on the contrary, scientific thought has confirmed the old intuition of the prophets that the God of the Universe is a unifying, systematizing, order-producing Power, no matter by whatever other name one calls it, and the battle-cry of Judaism, "Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is One," is as true today as it was on the day it was first uttered, whether by Moses or in his name; whether at Sinai or at some other spot on the way to the Land of Promise, or even in it.

Among the Jews of old as well as among us today, God was and is the Creator, the Shaper, the Rock and the Father of mankind. This thought is elemental and universal. He created the universe, peopled it with human beings, for whose benefit it was created. "O Lord, our God," says the writer of the Eighth Psalm,

"how glorious is Thy name in all the earth
when I behold Thy heavens, the work of Thy fingers,
the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained,
what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the
son of man that Thou thinkest of him? Yet hast Thou
made him but little lower than the angels, and hast
crowned him with glory and honor. Thou hast made
him to have dominion over the works of Thy hands—
Thou hast put all things under his feet—sheep and
oxen, all of them, yea and the beasts of the field; the
fowl of the air, and the fish of the sea; whatsoever
passeth through the paths of the sea—O Lord our
God, how glorious is Thy Name in all the earth." It is
He who "has created good and evil"—each to serve
man in its place for a purpose. He is the Father who
"created man in His own image—yea, in His own
image created He him."

CHAPTER III

GOD AS CREATOR

THE PASSAGES IN THE BIBLE that speak of the Creatorship of God are not a few. On the words of the very first verse in Genesis, "in the beginning God created the heaven and the earth," the whole ancient Jewish cosmology or science of the universe was based. When Moses gives to the Children of Israel the resume of the doings during the Wilderness, in the fourth Chapter of the Book of Deuteronomy, he exhorts them to seek God and to hearken to His voice. And as an evidence of God's care for Israel, he says: "For ask now of the days past, which were before thee, since the day that God created man upon the earth, and from the one end of the heavens unto the other, whether there hath been any such thing as this great thing is, or hath been heard like it" (the exodus from Egypt and the revelation at Sinai).

The prophets held the same ideas with regard to the Creatorship of God, and there is a particularly beautiful passage in the fortieth chapter of Isaiah which illustrates his thought of creation:

"Hath it not been told you from the beginning?
Have ye not understood the foundations of the
earth?

It is He that sitteth above the circle of the earth,
And the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers;
That stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain,
And spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in;
That bringeth princes to nothing;
He maketh the judges of the earth as a thing of
nought.

Scarce are they planted, scarce are they sown,
Scarce hath their stock taken root in the earth;
When He bloweth upon them, they wither,
And the whirlwind taketh them away as stubble.
Lift up your eyes on high and see who created
these?

He that bringeth out their host by the number,
He calleth them all by name,
By the greatness of his might, and for that He is
strong in power,
Not one faileth."

Isaiah 40:21-26.

In a similar vein, the same author, in the following chapter encourages his people to have faith in its God, the Creator and the Fashioner of the Universe, and not to be afraid of the surrounding enemies. Neither need they be afraid of the obstacles that Nature itself might set in their way. For tho

"The poor and the needy seek water, and there is
none,
And their tongue faileth for thirst;
I, the Lord will answer them, I the God of Israel
will not forsake them.
I will open rivers on the high hills, and fountains
in the midst of valleys;

I will make the wilderness a pool of water, and the
dry land springs of water;
I will plant in the wilderness the cedar, the acacia-
tree
And the myrtle and the oil-tree.
I will set in the desert the cypress, the plane-tree
and the larch together,
That they may see and know and consider and un-
derstand together,
That the hand of the Lord hath done this, and the
Holy One of Israel hath created it."

Isaiah 41:17-20.

And yet one more instance from this poet-
prophet, who saw in the universe the work of one
God—the world ruled by an Intelligence, unique, all-
powerful, all-embracing:

"I am the Lord and there is none else—beside Me
there is no God.
I have girded thee, tho thou hast not known Me.
That they may know from the rising of the sun,
and from the West,
That there is none besides Me.
I am the Lord and there is none else—
I form the light and create darkness—I make
peace and create evil—
I am the Lord that doeth all these things."

Isaiah 45:5-7.

Passages just as majestic and poetic are found in
the Psalms and Job. There is a particularly fine one

in Psalm 33 that brings to the fore the picturesqueness of the Psalmist's imagination:

"By the word of the Lord were the heavens made—
And all the hosts of them by the breath of His
mouth.
He gathered the waters of the sea together as a
heap,
He layeth up the deeps in the storehouses.
Let all the earth fear the Lord—
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe
of Him.
For He spoke and it was—He commanded, and it
stood." Psalm 33:6-9.

Another example of the rugged imagery of the Psalmist, as he conceives God as the Creator and the Mover of the Universe, working thru His creation, in many of its manifold aspects, runs thus:

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters—the God
of glory thundereth, even the Lord upon the
waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful—the voice of
the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars, yea the
Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars of
Lebanon.
He maketh them also to skip like a calf, Lebanon
and Sirion like a young wild ox.
The voice of the Lord heweth out flames of fire,

The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness, the
Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.

The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,
and strippeth the forests bare.

The Lord sat enthroned at the flood—yea the Lord
sitteth as King, forever.” Psalm 29:3-10

There is no literature in the world that surpasses that of the Psalms in majestic figure, in its naturalistic symbolism and in its poetic grandeur, with the exception of the speeches in the Book of Job. Here, one finds the poetry of nature at its highest and most beautiful level. Here ruggedness, majesty and splendor unite to make a picture of creation that is astoundingly grand and beautiful. One follows some of these speeches with a complete surrender to their appeal of literary artistry and symbolic imagery. The writer of the Book of Job was an artist of the highest merit, and it is not to be wondered that his work occupies a high place among the literary classics of humankind. Let me bring to your attention a part of the 38th chapter as an illustration:

The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind and
said:

“Who is this that darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge?

Gird up thy loins like a man, for I will demand of thee, and declare thou unto Me.

Where wast thou when I laid the foundation of the earth? Declare if thou hast the understanding.

Who determined the measures thereof, if thou
knowest, or who stretched the line upon it?
Whereupon were the foundations thereof fast-
ened, or who laid the corner stone thereof?
When the morning stars sang together, and all the
sons of God shouted for joy?
Or who shut up the sea with doors, when it broke
forth and issued out of the womb?
When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and
thick darkness, a swaddling-band for it?
And prescribed for it my decree, and set bars and
doors,
Saying, thus far shalt thou go, but no further,
and here shall thy proud waves be stayed?
Hast thou commanded the morning since thy days
began, and caused the dayspring to know
its place?
That it might take hold of the ends of the earth,
and the wicked be shaken out of it?
It is changed as clay under the seal, and they stand
as a garment.
Hast thou entered the springs of the sea, or hast
thou walked in the recesses of the deep?
Have the gates of death been revealed unto thee,
or hast thou seen the gates of the shadow of
death?
Hast thou surveyed unto the breadths of the
earth? Declare it if thou knowest."

Job 38:1-18.

And the poet goes on to enumerate the phenomena of the universe, the "place" of light and darkness,

the "treasuries" of snow and hail, the "way" of lightning and thunder and rain, and the guidance and the governing of the heavenly constellations—even thru brute creation which has been fashioned and is directed by God. This particular address put into the mouth of God is one of the finest in the Book of Job, and thruout, one feels the majesty and the glory of the Maker of the Universe, the King of all creation. He ends the speech with the words (41: 23-16):

"He maketh the deep to boil like a pot, he maketh
the sea like a seething mixture.

He maketh a path to shine after him, one would
think the deep to be hoary.

Upon the earth there is not His like, Who is made
to be fearless,

He looketh at all high things, He is King over all
the proud beasts."

CHAPTER IV

HEBREW CONCEPTION OF LIFE

THE FORCES OF CIVILIZATION, or that type of cultural and industrial activity which we call by that name, have brought to the fore the fact that life can best be preserved and enriched by the cooperative application of justice, love and righteousness. Perhaps we ought rather to say "merciful justice" and "social love"—instead of just the word "love"—and righteousness. To these, many would add, peace. These four form the basis of a social structure which if erected, and to carry out the figure—and could hold all of mankind, would bring about the goal aimed at by all religious instruction and ethical aspiration.

The Hebrew of the Bible did not departmentalize his life into the political and industrial and religious spheres as we do. He looked upon his activities as forming a whole, and what we are accustomed to call religious or secular, did not exist for him. His politics—if he had any, his simple agricultural or commercial life, and his religious habits were so intermingled that he could not separate them. The record of his life as we find it in the Bible testifies to this by the utter absence of any word like "religion" or phrase like "religious life" that would give us a clew to any division in his activities, such as we have today. Of course,

there were priests who took care of the Temple and the ritual for those who attended it, as well as for those who offered sacrifices. They were also men who were called or called themselves prophets, who interpreted what they took to be the word and the will of God. But the teaching which they enunciated was not called "religious" and segregated for purely religious conduct, and even the priests themselves were not conscious of separating their functions from the totality of the rest of life.

The holydays, for instance, were not just "religious" festivals. They were national days of memorial and celebration, much as our Fourth of July and Thanksgiving Day. They regarded their ceremonies in the Temple as part of their life—but not as a separate department of life. It is for this reason that we find what we call the religious laws, to be a part of their national law—or as we would regard it, a part of the secular law of the nation. As a matter of fact, so far as we know, the only laws that the Hebrews had, are the laws that have come down to us in the Bible. They may have had others—they surely did—but we do not know of them. Today, we have separation between church and state—in other words, there is a sphere of life which is distinctly secular and one which is just as distinctly sacred. Of course, there are instances in which these overlap or are brought into juxtaposition with each other. For instance, we swear in our public officials by a Bible; or a justice of the Supreme Court announces that we are a Christian nation, or, as is the custom in England, the state church has representatives in the House of Lords. Neverthe-

less, in the course of ordinary routine, we recognize the distinction between the religious and the non-religious. To the Hebrew of Biblical times, there was only one distinction—that which was holy and that which was profane, that which was permitted and that which was forbidden.

And so it was that when the Lawgiver promulgated a law such as for instance we find in the 19th Chapter of Leviticus: "Ye shall do no unrighteousness in judgment, in meteyard, in weight or in measure, just balances, just weights, a just ephah, (a dry measure of about 8½ gals.), and a just hin (about 4½ quarts)," it was for them a law used in ordinary commercial transactions; there was nothing sacred about it except the sacredness that attaches to the observance of the laws of the state. So also with the law in Leviticus 25, where it is stated: "thou shalt number seven sabbaths of the years unto thee, seven times seven years; and there shall be unto thee the days of seven sabbaths of years, even forty and nine years. Then shalt thou make proclamation with the blast of the horn on the tenth day of the seventh month; on the Day of Atonement shall ye make proclamation with the horn thruout all your land. And ye shall hallow the fiftieth year and proclaim liberty thruout the land unto all the inhabitants thereof; and ye shall return every man unto his possession, and ye shall return every man unto his family." In the fiftieth year, that is the Year of Jubilee, all lands which were taken in debt were to be returned to their original owners, and all slaves were to be also freed or manumitted. We have no records of such transactions, but we assume that the law was

obeyed. But all of this was not regarded as a "religious" proceeding. It was a part of the secular or national law regarding persons and property.

We look upon this legislation as being "religious," because it is found in the Bible. To the biblical Jew, it was one of the many national laws which he observed as a citizen of the Hebrew commonwealth. We may make this statement another way: The laws and precepts, or as it is stated often in the Bible, the statutes and ordinances which we have in our Bible were or were intended to be, a part—though doubtless, not all—of the national laws of the Hebrew commonwealth, and were observed without reference to what we now call "religious."

The interesting thing for us is that the basis for these national laws was what we would call the "religious" motive. Holiness as emphasized in the command "Holy shall ye be, for holy am I the Lord your God," (Lev. 19) was not merely an attitude to be put on when in the Temple or the shrine. It was the foundation of their ethical behavior and it included every virtue which was ascribed to a perfect ideal. Translated into terms of conduct, it motivated those virtues which were to apply to everyday life, and which alone could sanctify and ennoble life. Existence as a human being could be justified only if that existence exemplified the conduct that God expected from man. And he alone could claim God's protection and concern, who would worship Him through living in accordance with His commandments.

This we find to be true in the Five Books as well as in the Prophets; in the Psalms as well as in the Wis-

dom Literature. Love for God was coupled with the commandments to do that which is right in His sight—in fact the commandment to love God follows closely after the Ten Commandments; and shortly after the command to be holy, there follow the commandments in which occur the words; “thou shalt not avenge nor bear a grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself, I am the Lord.” And again in the same section (Lev. 19) the commandment is repeated in more emphatic form: “And if a stranger sojourn with thee in thy land, thou shalt not vex him . . . but thou shalt love him as thyself, for thou wert strangers in the land of Egypt,” and again, “I am the Lord your God,” to emphasize the fact that as God exhibits love, so must his children. The commandments, “thou shalt love the Lord thy God,” and “thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself,” were not uttered first by Jesus, as so many think. They were first given by Moses, or in his name, and only repeated by the teachers of the New Testament.

The virtue which is continually emphasized is that of social justice. “Tsedakah” is the word that caught the heart of the prophet. It is more than justice. It contains something of the thought of justifying one’s life by proper action. To know God is to follow in His ways, and to approach Him is to be loyal to His desires. And how may they be expressed? Micah indicates this: “It hath been told thee, O Man, what is good and what the Lord doth require of thee; but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God.” It was of this statement of Micah that

Huxley said: "If any so-called religion takes away from this great saying of Micah, I think it wantonly mutilates, while, if it adds thereto, I think it obscures the perfect ideal of religion." —T. H. Huxley in "Science and Hebrew Tradition," p. 161.

CHAPTER V

THE PROPHETS AND THEIR TIMES

THERE HAS NEVER BEEN a band of men quite like the Hebrew prophets. Other nations have had their soothsayers and diviners, and what the Bible calls seers. It must not be forgotten that Israel was a Semitic people, and that what the other Semites had, Israel had to a degree shared. Professor J. M. P. Smith says: "The great outstanding and enduring feature of Israel's life was her willingness to borrow from her neighbors. No nation has manifested a greater openness of mind and heart. Yet there was nothing of slavish dependence in her attitude. She exhibited a wonderful selective power in the things she took and in many cases her touch was transforming. Her pre-eminence was wholly in the sphere of quality and degree."

Of recent years it has been found that there were seers among the ancient Babylonians, Assyrians, Egyptians and even Syrians. There have even been close parallels between seers of the two latter and the Hebrew prophets, but never has there lived a group of men like the prophets who have devoted their best talents to the interpretation of what they considered God's word; and who in the face of royal opposition and popular fury stated and reiterated the messages

that seemed to them to lead to the best welfare of the people and the state.

Just as there is a vast difference between the prophet Samuel, who is early disclosed to us as a "man of God" when Saul, the first future king comes to him to ask him where his father's asses were, and between Isaiah, who announces the great principle that individual righteousness is true religion; so is there a difference between a prophet like Ahijah, who leads the popular rebellion against Rehoboam, and a Jeremiah, in whose bitterness of spirit is reflected the whole process of Israel's departure from the commandments of its God. There is a difference between the crude, almost curt prophet Elijah, who tells his king that he and not the prophet is "the troubler" in Israel, and the fine and almost stately bearing of Hosea, as he addresses himself to his people in elegant language, and with refined exhortation tells them to come back to their God, who will forgive them because of His deep love, even as did the human husband forgive the erring wife who betrayed him.

The prophets felt themselves divinely inspired to assist in what they believed to be the carrying on of the work of God thru Israel. Whatever may be our verdict from the point of view of present day psychology, to them, their dreams and their visions were true. So much was this the truth for them, that they called others who prophesied, "lying prophets;" and these history has proved to have been "false prophets," because the counsels which they gave proved to be false counsels, though they thought themselves just as true as the others. It so happened that they did not read

the signs of the times as correctly as did those whose prophecies seemed to have been partly fulfilled. It is hinted also, that the false prophets were ready to agree with the powers that were in control, and that there were occasions where desire rather than inspiration swayed their judgments. This cannot be said of the true prophets. They gave themselves up to what they considered the message of God — and they often suffered for what they regarded as the truth. Tradition tells us that Amos was expelled from the Northern Kingdom; Isaiah was put into a hollow tree and the tree was sawed in two parts; and Jeremiah was stoned to death in the land of Egypt, where he went into voluntary exile rather than go to Babylon or remain in the destitute land of Judea, after so many of its inhabitants were carried away.

As the true prophets were the guardians of Israel's spiritual heritage, many of their prophecies or addresses took the form of threats and reproofs. And that is what was to be expected. People in those days were no different than people in our days. In spite of the commandments and ordinances, in spite of the warnings of the teachers and even the kings, such as Hezekiah and Josiah, the people strayed from the path of righteousness. It was easier to imitate others than to follow along the narrow roads of their own religious teaching. To the prophet, the forsaking of God and His laws was synonymous with bringing on national destruction; so against the sins of greed, idolatry and immorality, they thundered. To them, neither wealth, nor connections with non-Hebrew royalty, nor extension of domain were the things to

be desired. For them, there was only one thing that would lead to the eternity of the people Israel, and that was strict conformance to the will of God. Nothing else mattered, and to this goal, they directed their attention, whether kings or nobles, whether the wealthy merchants or the strange wives of the rulers of the people, were involved.

It must be remembered that as Israel, in both kingdoms, progressed, the early and more simple agricultural life of the Hebrews gradually changed into a richer and more complex, commercial and social life. The rapid growth of luxury and extravagance, initiated under Solomon, did not diminish in either kingdom, except when the hand of the conqueror lay at the throat. The Northern Kingdom had seceded from the monarchy about 933, under Jereboam, and with prosperity coming to it, it adopted the extravagances of the House of David. There were injustices against the poor, greed on the part of the nobles and the rich, and oppression of the masses. The land which had been apportioned in the old days of the Settlement had passed thru many hands, and new adjustments were constantly made, to the disadvantage of the poor. The law not to "remove the ancient land marks" lost its power, and with that loss, the plight of the poor became more wretched. The ideal days of the Wilderness—ideal now during political and consequently economic changes—were longed for, and the prophets were alert to the inequalities which these changes of the new times were creating.

The land that was formerly parceled out to the different tribes and clans was gradually being absorbed

by the wealthier, either by purchase or thru debt. With the examples of luxury from the Egyptian, Phoenician, Damascan and even Assyrian Courts, the nobility of Israel began to indulge in unwonted extravagance. As is usually the case, the poor paid the price. From the ruddy, healthy, simple, shepherd-folk of the period of the Judges, there arose a complex nation, seeking splendor and elegance, apeing other nations in search for wealth and expansion, but widening the rift between the poor and the rich. At the same time, the people were straying from the worship of their God. Just as there was an influence from the outside on the economic and commercial life, so was there a deteriorating influence from within as well as without, on the moral and religious life. There was danger that the God-worship would be over-whelmed by Canaanitish idol-worship, just as there was the danger that injustice and desire for luxury would debase the whole ethical life as conceived by the prophetic teachers.

Thus it was that at the time of the great prophets, conditions arose which began to debase society. Wealth was acquired without regard to method. The dulling of the spiritual sensibilities, immorality and injustice followed. Unrighteousness possessed alike to a large extent the rich and the poor, the judges and the judged, the priests and the worshippers. The rights of the downtrodden were disregarded, and where injustice and corruption could be of avail, they were resorted to. Selfishness and greed directed the mind of the nobility and the rich, and the condition of the poor became more and more deplorable. He who had the

courage to speak uprightly and condemn injustice was hated. A judge who gave just decisions was mocked; vice and bribery were the order of the day. The value of human life, the desire for high ideals, and reverence for contracts sank in the general degradation, and the words that tradition had sanctified as the laws of Sinai and Horeb, were forgotten, in the unholy chase for wealth and luxury and power.

CHAPTER VI

THE TEACHINGS OF THE PROPHETS

WITH RIGHTEOUS INDIGNATION, stern rebuke, and towering rage, the prophets set out to restore Israel to its spiritual possessions. They saw wherein their people had missed the mark of national holiness and individual righteousness. They saw that injustice and dishonesty, wickedness and immorality, worship of false gods and forsaking the true God, had blurred the sense of duty. They saw that all these needed to be flayed—but they had no definite program. They saw that all that they could do, was to reiterate and reemphasize the teachings of their faith and recall wandering Israel back to the worship of his own God; and with unexcelled might and superhuman foresight, they affirmed Israel's salvation—and the salvation of mankind: Social justice and individual righteousness based on man's faith in a holy God, and on the necessity of benevolent service to man—these alone can save.

For them, the worshipping of God had no meaning if it did not realize itself in ethical deed. When the prophet Amos saw the general degradation incident to the violation of true living as seen by him and his fellow-teachers, he did not forbear to speak. It was his task to cry out—and he was stopped neither

by fear nor by expediency. Having been a man of independent means, he had no fear that what he would say, would endanger his livelihood. As a prophet, tho he tells us that he was neither a "nabi"—, prophet or seer, "nor the son of a prophet," he thundered against the idle rich and their orgies; against the oppression of the poor and the religious hypocrisy that attended their offerings and sacrifices. He was not to be frightened by the landowner and the corrupt official, nor yet by the powers that were in the saddle—in his own country, or in that of the people to the North—the Kingdom of Israel. To Amos, Israel was only one of many peoples, but its relation to God was different from that of others because its business was to live according to the precepts of God. Others could do it—Israel must. It is true that the Lord requires all nations to be just, and even punishes those which are not. But Israel must be just—it cannot escape the penalty of its own injustice. "Hear ye" says the prophet, "this word that the Lord hath spoken against you, O children of Israel, against the whole family which I brought up out of the land of Egypt, saying: 'You only have I known of all the families of the earth, therefore will I visit upon you all of your iniquities'."

The words of this battler for social justice must have fallen with terrific force upon those who thought themselves exempt from God's punishment because they were of the "holy people." But Amos demurred from this smug conception. Do not think so, ye "kine of Bashan", says the prophet to the women: "You that oppress the poor and crush the needy" and egg your husbands on to repeat this kind of conduct in order

to enjoy luxuries—you will suffer war and famine and exile; for the terrible injustices that you cause, will bring upon your heads deserved requitals. He admonishes his people to seek God, not the idols; for in seeking the true God will they find true life; and this appeal is made to those “who turn justice into wormwood, who cast righteousness to the ground, who hate him who approves justly in the courts and abhor him who speaks uprightly.” They who crush righteousness and justice will not live to enjoy the fruits of their iniquity, warns the exhorter — and history proves that he was right!

Turning again to the listening crowd to whom he has portrayed the sins of their conduct, and having prophesied the wrath of the Almighty, he begs them to “seek good, and not evil that ye may live, and so the Lord the God of Hosts will be with you. Hate the evil and love the good, and establish justice in the gate (court). It may be that the Lord will be gracious to the remnant of Joseph.”

One of the finest passages in the whole prophetic literature was given to us by this rugged teacher of social justice. I do not know of anything that is more stirring and that has a more timely application to certain types of luxurious church ritual of our own day. “I hate, I despise your feasts, and I will take no delight in your solemn assemblies. Tho ye offer me your burnt offerings and your meal offerings, I will not accept them. Take away from Me the noise of thy songs—and let me not hear the melodies of thy psalteries. But let “justice well up as the waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.” One thinks of our

wealthy houses of worship, of our great choirs, our costly organs, our beautiful temples and churches—and then is saddened by the misery and the squalor and the inequality and the wretchedness and the illness and the starvation—in all of which our pious ritualists are not blameless; and one wonders whether the prophet might have foreseen what we have experienced in our own days! The God of Amos was the Demander of Social Justice—and they who called upon Him could do so sincerely and unhypocritically, only when they did not desecrate His name thru injustice.

When Hosea, using the story of his own domestic tragedy as a basis for his appeal to Israel's return to God, wants to emphasize the ethical implication of its meaning, he tells his people that the time will come when God will no longer be called simply "baali" my master, but "ishi", my husband. And when that time comes and the whole people will have that faith in God that exists between husband and wife, the relationship will not be a light one. It will have in it the highest qualities of moral conduct and ethical purity—it will realize itself in the most effective and godly conduct. With God and for God, Israel will live in peace and for eternity, in righteousness and in justice, in lovingkindness and in mercy, in faithfulness and in truth. In the words of the prophet; "I will break the bow and the sword and the battle out of the land; and I will make them to lie down in safety. And I will betroth thee unto Me forever; yea, I will betroth thee unto Me in righteousness and in justice, and in lovingkindness and in compassion. I will betroth thee unto Me in faithfulness, and thou shalt know the Lord."

Israel the people of God, shall be His, only when it has attained the ideals of social justice as a people.

To the prophetic mind the application of justice and kindness to every day life was the only remedy for social evils. Regeneration of society could come about only thru faith in God and thru godly conduct to men. It was this that Micah had in mind when he uttered the quotation already referred to—"It hath been told thee O Man, what is good and what is required of thee—but to do justly, to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God." The whole social and economic fabric was put upon an ethical basis, and whatever was wrong and unjust, could be remedied only by a return to right-thinking and right-doing—a return to the demands of social justice, individual rectitude and a faith in God—or the sure destruction of the nation would follow. "Woe to them that devise iniquity and work evil upon their beds; when the morning is light, they execute it, because it is in the power of their hand. They covet fields and seize them; and houses, and take them away. Thus they oppress a man and his house, even a man and his heritage. Therefore saith the Lord, behold, against this people do I devise an evil from which ye shall not remove their necks, neither shall ye walk upright, for it shall be an evil time." Micah 2:1-3.

Micah was not one to bow his head to those in power. His first concern was the plight of the people—the mass as against the class. If there were elements which could have harmed him, he disregarded these just as did Amos earlier, when with the courage of a

superhuman he invaded the court of the king of the Northern Kingdom, Jereboam, and raising his mighty voice against injustice there, was turned back with the reprimand—"Go thou, O seer, flee away into the land of Judah, and there eat bread and prophesy there." It was at this juncture that Amos, angered by the advice to earn his living as a prophet in Judah, retorted: "I am not a prophet nor yet the son of a prophet"; meaning that he did not belong to that school of men whose profession it was to be a seer, and who earned their bread by "prophesying." And then stung to the quick by the proffered slight, Amos shoots back: "Now therefore hear thou me, Amaziah; 'Thou sayest prophecy not against Israel, and preach not against the house of Isaac'; therefore thus saith the Lord; Thy wife shall be a harlot in the city, and thy sons and daughters shall fall by the sword, and thy land shall be divided by line; thou thyself shalt die in an unclean land, and Israel surely shall be led away captive out of his land." We have no record of Amaziah's—the king's priest's answer to Amos. That the prophet was not harmed is certain. Whether the prophecy was realized in all its details we do not know; but Israel was destroyed, and Samaria its capital fell about 721.

Just as Amos had no fear of the "higher-ups", so was Micah impervious to their threats. He knew that much of the corruption depended upon the willingness of those in power to be parties to it. He understood that if judges were bribed, officers bought, and crime winked at, it was not the fault of the oppressed poor. He knew that the administration of justice was not in the hand of the debtor and the poverty-

stricken. It was not so in those days, and it is not so today; and so like Amos of an earlier day, he turned upon the chiefs of the state, unafraid and unabashed. "Hear ye, I pray you, O ye heads of Jacob, and rulers of the House of Israel: Is it not for you to know justice? Ye—who hate the good and love the evil; who rob their skin from off people and their flesh from off their bones. Who flay their skin and break their bones? They shall cry unto the Lord, but He will not answer them. Yea he will hide His face from them at that time, according as they have wrought evil in their doings." It was this same prophet who excoriated the hypocritical, and who taught that "thousands of rams and ten thousands rivers of oil" would not avail before God—if the heart of the offerer were insincere and the soul bereft of justice and love and humility.

In line with the thought of Micah that offerings and sacrifices that were not born of a righteous and contrite heart could not gain the favor nor appease the wrath of the Almighty, was the teaching of perhaps the greatest of the literary prophets, namely Isaiah, who was an older contemporary of Micah, and who with him repeated the famous vision of eternal peace in Chapter 2.

"And it shall come to pass in the end of days
That the mountain of the Lord's house shall be
established as the top of the mountains
And shall be exalted above the hills.
And all nations shall flow unto it.
And many people shall go and say—

'Come ye, let us go up to the mountain of the Lord
To the house of the God of Jacob—
And he will teach us of his ways,
And we will walk in his paths'—
For out of Zion shall go forth the Law,
And the word of the Lord from Jerusalem.
And he shall judge between the nations—
And shall decide for many peoples—
And they shall beat their swords into ploughshares
And their spears into pruning-hooks.
Nation shall not lift up sword against nation,
Neither shall they learn war anymore."

Just as these two were similarly minded in respect to war, so were they thoroughly agreed on the matter of false ritual and insincere sacrifice. Right living simply could not mean only offering and sacrifice and music and injustice and iniquity and robbery and oppression. Isaiah could put himself into the place of the rich for he was the scion of a wealthy family. He knew the life and the psychology of the rich and he understood the misery and the sufferings of the poor. He was not only a prophet in the sense of telling the ethical message of God to his people, but he was a statesman, who was quite familiar with the politics of the then world, and who applied his knowledge and practical wisdom to the social and political problems of the day. We can understand then the motive which swayed the prophet when he thunders—"Hear ye the word of the Lord—ye rulers of Sodom; give ear unto the law of our God, ye people of Gomorrah". Of course he is not talking to the inhabitants of the

two cities that were destroyed because of the evil that tradition tells us, was done in them. He is comparing the heads and the nobility of Jerusalem to the evil-reputed inhabitants of the two infamous cities. If the tradition of Sodom and Gomorrah were as well-known to his hearers as it is to us, its application to the men of his city must have been a pretty bitter dose to those to whom it was applied.

Epithets like this did not serve to make Isaiah beloved of the powers in Jerusalem, and he was hated, as were the other true prophets. Nor did he stop with calling names. Knowing the tendency of many hardened rich to salve their consciences thru pietistic rite and ceremony he attacks them at this angle. "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? Saith the Lord. I am full of the burnt offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks or lambs or he-goats. . . . Bring no more vain oblations—it is an offering of abomination unto Me; so are your holydays—. I cannot endure iniquity with your solemn assembly. My soul hateth your new-moon festivals and your festive seasons—, they are a burden to me and I am tired of them. Nor will I hear your prayers when you lift up your hands in supplication to me. Your hands are full of blood." Isaiah 1:11-20.

The prophet did not stop with mere condemnation. He was wise enough to know that the world is full of critics who destroy and break down—who are always willing to criticise and find fault, but who seldom or never propose anything constructive in the place of that which they pull down. Isaiah knew that

his chastisement would lose its force if he did not tell his people what they should do in place of what they did do, and so he goes on in this sermon to tell them what true worship of God is. If you want to offer sacrifices, and have solemn services, and if you desire to celebrate your new moons and festivals, alright—but that is not serving God unless with these you “wash you, make yourselves clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well. Seek justice, relieve the oppressed, judge the fatherless, plead for the widow.”

And then as if to soften the hard logic of this discourse, as if to comfort those who feel that perhaps they are altogether out of the fellowship of religious folk, since they have omitted to do what the prophet asks of them, he pleads that they return to the righteous fold and make some sort of an attempt to right themselves with their God. “Come now, let us reason together, saith the Lord,” he pleads, “though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white snow; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as (white) wool. If ye be willing and obedient, ye shall eat of the good of the land, but if ye rebel, ye shall be devoured by the sword, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken.”

And what does this “rebellion” consist of? Where before Jerusalem was a faithful city, she has become a harlot; she has departed from the true worship of her God; where once she was full of justice and righteousness, she now has murderers; her princes are companions of thieves; everyone loves bribes and follows after dishonest rewards; they do not act justly to the fatherless, nor do they regard the cause of the

widow. Where the Lord expected justice, He found violence! Where He looked for righteousness, He found an outcry against it. His people had been taught—but they had not learned, “that the Lord of Hosts is exalted through justice, and the God, the Holy One, is sanctified through righteousness.” And if they persist in their rebellion, woe will come unto them who insist on calling that which is evil, good; and that which is good, evil; that change darkness into light, and light into darkness; that change bitter into sweet, and sweet, into bitter; that justify the wicked for a bribe, and deprive him who is righteous, by wickedness; and they will be devoured like stubble, like the chaff which the flame consumes; their roots shall turn into rottenness and their blossoms shall turn into dust “because they have rejected the Lord of Hosts, and condemned the word of the Holy One of Israel.”

Time and again in the thirty-nine chapters which constitute the work of the so-called First Isaiah we find these strictures against the violations of the commandments of the God of Israel. There was no sparing of feelings—no compromise with evil and corruption. He assailed those whom he thought guilty and he was willing to take whatever punishment it was in their power to give him. He believed himself to have been consecrated by a live coal from the divine altar, by the tongs held in the hands of an angel, and he was not the one to recede from the true conception of the worship of that God who he fancied, as told in that beautiful chapter of the Vision of Consecration, selected him Himself, to preach the truth amidst a people of unclean lips. There is a tradition that the

prophet so incensed those against whose unrighteousness he proclaimed, that they put him to death as noted above. But the death of Isaiah—if it came about in this way, did not stop the truth of his teachings nor avoid the penalties predicted in his denunciations. In the larger aspects of his prophecies, and to a very large extent, his words were “words of truth.”

As Isaiah is said to have suffered martyrdom, so also was it the fate of his greatest successor, Jeremiah, the Man of Sorrows. The son of a priestly family, this strange character believed himself to have been chosen even before his birth, to be a prophet unto Israel. Like Isaiah he was not simply a preacher against social ills. He was a man of the upper class who was familiar with the political horizon of his day; who knew what was going on in the international world of his time, and who could form correct judgments in matters of national policy. The duty and the destiny of Israel were his chief concern and to this he gave himself. He refused to go to Babylonia with the other exiles, in the hope that he might die with his people on his native soil. But when conditions arose that made it absolutely necessary for him to leave, he chose to go to Egypt, where tradition says, he so bitterly antagonized the leaders of the exiled group by his reproofs against their conduct that he was stoned to death by them. Just as he had found no peace in his beloved land, so found he no peace among his miserable fellow-exiles.

You may recall that the prophets looked upon Jerusalem as a holy city and upon Israel as a holy, specially designated people to do God’s will. Jeremiah,

like his predecessors looked back with admiration to the days when God "remembered for thee (Jerusalem) the affection of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, how thou wentest after Me in the wilderness in a land that was not sown; for Israel is the Lord's hallowed portion, His first fruits of the increase." But now something has happened. Jerusalem and Israel are no longer close to the Lord. They have defiled His land and have made His heritage an abomination. They that administer the law, know not God, and they who are in power transgress against Him. Even prophets are prophesying falsely and leading their listeners astray. His people have committed two evils. They have "forsaken their own God, the fountain of living waters, and they have hewed them out cisterns, broken cisterns than can hold no water." They have gone into vice and sin, corruption and injustice. They have worshipped other gods and permitted themselves to indulge in immoralities. They have become a "foolish" people, for they know not God; they are "sottish children that have no understanding"; "they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no understanding."

But God is willing to receive His people back. As He was their Lord in days of yore, so will He be again. But there is one condition. Israel can return only—and thus be preserved—if he will put away the detestable things from before him, and will swear to live, "As the Lord liveth, in truth, in justice and in righteousness." The Almighty will not preserve a nation of sinners; He will not condone evil even in His Chosen ones. The Daughter of Zion may gasp for breath. She may spread out her hands and implore God to save her

from the enemies who come from other lands to slay her, but help will come only if she repent and return to the Holy One and His ordinances. So corrupt is she now, that one may "run to and from the streets of Jerusalem, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth." "If you can find one such," saith the Lord, "I will pardon her."

Jeremiah developed the idea of individual responsibility and stressed the personal obligation to be pure and righteous. There could be no worthy nation unless its individuals maintain the correct relation with God, and no individual, no matter what his fathers did or how they behaved, was denied the love and mercy and grace that God would bestow upon those who knew Him. A new day was at hand; not that in which sons were punished for the sins of their fathers. But a day in which "they shall say no more; The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the childrens' teeth are set on edge." Let those who can, turn from their ways. Let them stop telling lies; let them cease to weary themselves from doing injustice. Let them desist from cultivating deceit; let them stop disregarding the word of their God. "They proceed from wickedness to wickedness, and have no regard for Me, saith the Lord." This can lead only to destruction, and to the disappearance of those who misunderstand their duty and destiny. Let them return to God! Enough blindness! Enough stiff-neckedness! Enough hardness of heart! "Thus saith the Lord," says the prophet; "Let not the wise man glory in his wisdom; nor the mighty man glory in his might. Let not the rich man glory in

his riches. But let him who glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, who exercises mercy, justice and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." Jeremiah 9:23-24.

What a superb answer this is, to those really spiritual souls, who, lost in a struggle for religious satisfaction, find themselves groping for a reply to their earnest and sincere questionings concerning that which is truly religious—that in which they could truly feel their Maker takes delight!

CHAPTER VII

THE PROPHETS OF THE EXILE

I HAVE SAID NOTHING about another prophet of the Exile, Ezekiel, who clearly stressed individualism in the Bible, and to whose work was largely due the preservation of the Jewish tradition during the Exile. It was he who first made the direct and definite appeal to the individual to save his soul. It was he who taught that "the soul that sinneth, it shall die." It was he who taught that the righteousness of the father shall not shield a sinful son, nor shall the wickedness of a child, be visited upon his father. Every man is the guardian of his own soul—and he who repents before the judgment will be shown the mercy of God. For God has "no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will ye die, O House of Israel?" It was this prophet also, who visioned a new Israel, a new Holy City, composed of true sons of Israel, whose lives will be knit to God through their living in utter harmony with His holiness. The New Jerusalem will be the representative of God to the nations of the world, and in it, God will rule over His people who shall dwell, purified from wickedness, in complete individual and community righteousness.

There is a passage which summarizes the teach-

ings of this prophet, and sets forth that which the Lord demands of those who would live. It shows the relationship between the individual and the community, and points out the way of salvation. It is by all odds one of the finest passages in the Book of Ezekiel, and runs thus, in part: "And the word of the Lord came unto me saying: What mean ye that ye use this proverb in the land of Israel, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?" We may remember that we met this proverb also in the Book of the prophet Jeremiah. "As I live, saith the Lord," continues Ezekiel, "ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in Israel. Behold, all souls are Mine; as the soul of the father, so also the soul of the son is Mine; the soul that sinneth, it shall die. But if a man be just, and do that which is lawful and right . . . hath not lifted up his eyes to idols, nor hath defiled his neighbor's wife . . . and hath not wronged anyone, but hath restored his pledge for a debt, hath taken nought by robbery, but hath shared his bread with the hungry and hath covered the naked by a garment; he that hath not lent money at interest, and hath not taken the increase; if he withhold his hand from crime, observe strict justice between man and man, follow My statutes and keep My ordinances to obey them—he is righteous and shall surely live, saith the Lord God." Ezekiel 18:2-9.

I have not mentioned Isaiah of the Exile or the "Unknown Prophet" and the probable author of Chapters 40-66 of the present Book of Isaiah. This prophet is responsible largely for the later ideas of the

universality of God, as well as for the idea that Israel is to be a servant of God and a light to the nations. The God of this prophet is not the God of Palestine or the Jews alone; he is the God of all the earth and of all the people, tho Israel is His chosen servant, who is to make His name known even among the isles of the sea. It was this prophet more than any other, that is responsible for the conception of the "Mission of Israel." This phrase has elicited a good deal of fun-poking from a certain type of fellow-Jews. In the minds of some critics of this conception, there seems to be a mystic connection with the word "missionary" as used by our Christian churchmen. This is not so. The idea of the Mission of Israel is definitely set forth in this book, as it is hinted at in other books of the Bible. If there is to be a Kingdom of Heaven on earth, Israel has been elected to bring this about, through his own righteousness and through spreading the knowledge of God thruout the earth. In the various chapters of the Unknown Prophet the use of the word "servant" points clearly to the fact that Israel is to be that Servant of God which shall make Him known thruout the world, and that he has been chosen as the "light" to spread the knowledge of God among the nations.

In opposition to those who scoff at the idea of Israel's Mission, there are those who maintain that if we, as a people, have no longer anything to contribute to the world, we are foolish to preserve ourselves as a people. If Israel has completed its task—if it has nothing else to do, if its ideals have become the possession of the world, if its teachings are the ways of the world, if its God is the God of Mankind, we are done. Why

carry the burdens that an unfriendly world puts upon us; why subject ourselves and our children to oppression and martyrdom; why bear the scoffs and scorn of mankind if we have outlived our usefulness, and are simply the dying remnants of a former dynamic people? If we have no work to do—no role to play, let us admit that we are in the process of dissolution—and the quicker we dissolve, the better for ourselves, our children and the world. But for those of us who believe that we still have a mission, or a task, if one likes the word better, there is much in the Bible, and particularly in this prophetic book, that offers us ground for our belief. Here we read: "Yet now hear O Jacob, My servant, and Israel whom I have chosen, thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, who will help thee: Fear not O Jacob My servant, and thou Jeshurun, whom I have chosen fear ye not, neither be afraid; have I not announced to thee of old, and declared it? And ye are my witnesses—is there a God beside Me? Isaiah 44:2-8. Another passage of Isaiah and an equally much quoted one: "Behold My servant whom I uphold, Mine elect, in whom My soul delighteth; I have put My spirit upon him—he shall make the right to go forth to the nations. . . . He shall not fail nor be crushed till he have set the right in the earth, and the isles shall wait for his teaching." There are many more similar passages but I want to quote only one. Here Israel is represented as speaking. It is of course, the voice of the prophet, as he addresses his listeners somewhere in Babylonia: "And now saith the Lord that formed me from the womb to be His servant, to bring Jacob back to Him,

and that Israel be gathered unto Him. . . . He saith: Since thou art My servant, it is too light a thing that I should raise up the tribes of Jacob and restore the preserved of Israel: And so I will give thee to be a light of the nations, that My deliverance may be to the end of the earth." Time and again this great prophet stresses the fact that Israel is the Servant of the Almighty, and that to him is given the task of bringing the knowledge of God to the nations of the earth. To those who feel that the world is still in need of a people that would consecrate itself to the task of being a "light to the Gentiles," the Mission idea is clear. If Israel endures—it endures for this. Isaiah: 42:1-4; 49:5-6.

In this short sketch-book it is impossible to do all the prophets justice. We shall not attempt to say anything about the other minor prophets, Joel, Obadiah, Jonah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah and Malachi. Each has made his contribution, and in the books of each, there will be found enough inspiration to warrant the reader's perusal of the works of these teachers whose names are not as well-known and whose teachings are not as familiar as are those of the other prophets. Passages similar to that of Zechariah: "There are three things that ye shall do: Speak every man the truth with his neighbor; execute the judgment of truth and peace in your gates; let none of you devise evil in your hearts against his neighbor; and love no false oath—for all these things I hate, saith the Lord"—are found in the other writings, but it would take a much larger volume than this can be, to point them out.

CHAPTER VIII

THE HOLY WRITINGS

IT WOULD NOT BE QUITE FAIR to omit even from a volume as small as this one, the religious view-points of some of the books in the third part of our Bible, or the Holy Writings. In some of these books, for instance, the Psalms, Job and Ecclesiastes, there are discussions of religious problems that are of the deepest nature. There is no uniformity of point of view throughout this section, except of course, agreement on the unity of God and Israel's relationship to Him—and this does not occur in every book. Strangely enough, the word "God" or "Providence" or its synonyms do not occur once in the Book of Esther. Ecclesiastes is a book of doubt—and would not have been permitted in the roll of biblical books at all had it not been for an addition at the end in which fear of God is extolled. The Book of Ruth is unique as a document of the liberal-minded Hebrews who were not opposed to taking into their household, a Moabite, who was to become even the ancestor of a Hebrew king. Some of the books like the Song of Songs and Lamentations have little ethical value, while the historical narratives like Ezra, Nehemiah and Chronicles are frank records of historical achievements to give the nation a knowledge of itself and a consciousness of its value and

greatness. Daniel is an apocalypse pleading for courage at a time of persecution, and setting forth the hope of a resurrected and reconstructed kingdom of God for Israel. It is given in the form of dreams or visions and the information is conveyed by symbolism. It is one of the first, if not the first work of that class of literature, which later assumed a place among a certain class of believers, and is called pseudepigraphic literature. The Book of Proverbs is a series of thirty-one chapters giving us the wisdom of the sages in the form of proverbs—some short and some longer, dealing with various topics that touch the courses of ordinary life.

Of greater interest to us than most of the books of the Bible, is the Book of Psalms, or the Psalter. This is a collection of 150 religious poems, songs and meditations that cover almost the whole gamut of devotional moods. The beauty, the rhythm, the religious fervor, the pious trustfulness and the ethical sublimity of these compositions have made them immortal. The Book of Psalms of the Jewish people has become the hymnal of the Christian church, and the expressions of the religious life of numberless millions. It is fair to say that no literature comparable to the Psalter has been produced—not at least in the occidental civilization.

Let us consider just a few of the more outstanding compositions. Perhaps the best known and most often repeated of all the Psalms is the Twenty-third. This is the meditation of a pious believer trusting in the complete goodness and mercifulness of the Shepherd. It is the philosophy of life of a chastened soul

that has gone thru the common vicissitudes of the earthly man, and is contented with the lot that has been his; satisfied with his portion, and confident that as long as there is breath in his body, the good Shepherd will lead his soul and care for him. He accepts life with contentment and pious resignation. It is the complete surrender of the faithful believer in the goodness of Providence, with an overwhelming trust in the kindness and mercy of God.

Of a somewhat different type is the Fifteenth. Here is set forth the ideally religious man—the man who is worthy of being called Godly. And who is such? One who has lived the life of a high individual idealism, and has practiced true righteousness. As one reads this Psalm, he is reminded of the prophetic statements with regard to the demands of justice, mercy, truth and honesty.

“Oh Lord, who shall sojourn in Thy tabernacle?
Who shall dwell upon the Holy Mountain?
He that walketh uprightly and worketh
 righteousness,
And speaketh the truth in his heart.
That hath no slander upon his tongue—nor doeth
 evil to his fellow,
Nor taketh a reproach against his neighbor,
He that puteth not out his money on interest,
Nor taketh a bribe against the innocent.
He that doeth these things—shall not be moved.”

Here is the glorious Eighth Psalm, the one that puts the seal of divinity upon humankind and makes it but “little lower than the angels.” I know of nothing more beautiful in literature that exalts men, than this

panegyric. "When I behold the heavens, the work of Thy fingers, the moon and the stars which Thou hast ordained, what is man that Thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that Thou thinkest of him? Yet hast Thou made him but little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honor." It seems to me that when one reads this, there must arise in his heart a yearning so to live that his life may justify the high place given to mortal by the author of this Psalm. To make of man something less than gods, to put under "the feet" of man all nature, to give to puny man a place in heaven itself—is to put upon us, I should think, the high responsibility which ought to make us circumspect indeed, of our duties and obligations.

An interesting example of the type of Psalm that tells something of the ideals that a ruler should have, occurs in Psalm Seventy-two. Here the Lord is asked to "give Thy judgments, O God, and Thy righteousness unto the king's son, that he may judge Thy people with righteousness, and Thy poor with justice. Let the mountains bear peace to the peoples, and the hills, righteousness; may he judge the afflicted of the people, and give deliverance to the poor, and crush the oppressor." Material prosperity is also requested for the prince, for he deserves it since "he rescues the needy when he calls for help, and the afflicted who has no helper; he takes pity upon the poor and the needy and saves the life of the needy. From "oppression and violence he ransoms them, and precious is their blood in his eyes." A ruler of this sort deserves God's blessings—in those days as in these, and so the singer goes on

to say of him, "may his name endure forever
may men bless themselves in him."

One of the very finest of the Psalms is the One-hundred and Nineteenth. Here one finds a complete philosophy of the religious life. Here obedience to God's commandments, a knowledge of the ordinances that make life righteous, of the precepts that make man godlike, the life that exalts man God-ward—here all of these are stressed. Here is a statement of the humility of mortal man, and a prayer that the sojourner here might make his short journey under the pillar of God's watchfulness and His mercy. Here is a prayer for understanding, so that the vices that grip man may be overcome, and covetousness and enmity and injustices may be avoided. Here is the offer of a supPLICATOR who wants to give himself wholly and heartily to the God of justice and righteousness and mercy—and who desires in return, only a consciousness that God has accepted this offering and has given him salvation, contentment and spiritual peace. "Righteous art Thou O Lord, and upright are Thy judgments. Thou hast commanded Thy testimonies in righteousness and exceeding faithfulness. My zeal hath undone me, because adversaries have forgotten Thy words. Thy word is tried to the uttermost, and Thy servant loveth it. I am small and despised, yet have I not forgotten Thy precepts. Thy righteousness is an everlasting righteousness, and Thy law is truth. Trouble and anguish have overtaken me, yet Thy commandments are my delight—Thy testimonies are righteous forever more. Give me understanding—and I shall live." These last verses have been

the indestructible banner of the Jewish people thru-out the ages. How many uncounted millions have recited "trouble and anguish have overtaken me, yet Thy commandments are my delight,"—it is the ever-recurring cry of Israel's spiritual struggle.

I should like to suggest to the reader that he take his Bible down from its musty shelf and open it to the Book of Psalms. Read. There will be some there that you will not like; there will be some there that will not fit your conception of life and living; there will be some there that will even appeal to you as being terribly vengeful and brutal. Remember, you are reading the deepest sentiments of a people misunderstood and maltreated—for many Psalms are the expressions of individual suffering and bitterness. You will find only a few of these. But, by far the largest number are the expressions of religious souls whose yearning for the holy life, whose loyalty to their ideals, whose reverent piety and whose whole-souled seeking after communion with God, awaken in one sympathetic sentiments of humility and reverence, and bring on a spiritual mood that carries one away from the dross of everyday drabness, and lifts him into an atmosphere of calm and contentment, and may I say it, in these days of materialism and concreteness, into a spirit of mystic devotionism.

The Book of Proverbs consisting of thirty-one chapters, presents the mature experiences of Jewish wise men, in poetic form. It covers many phases of life, but especial attention is paid to the inculcation of moral conduct and the proper bringing up of children. There is a fine exaltation of womanhood,

as well as condemnation of and warning against lewd women. Wisdom is exalted and youth is commanded to cultivate and follow her. "Now therefore" she says, "ye children hearken unto me, for happy are they who keep my ways; hear instruction and be wise, and refuse it not. Happy is the man that hearkeneth to me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoso findeth me, findeth life, and obtaineth favor of the Lord. But he that misseth me wrongeth his own soul; all they that hate me, love death." Even in the early days of the compilation of these proverbs, Wisdom was an ideal of the Jews, and it has always remained such. Let me close this paragraph on this book with a short quotation from the last chapter—the exaltation of womanhood: "A woman of valor, who can find her? For her price is far above rubies. The heart of her husband doth safely trust in her, and he hath no lack of gain. She doeth him good and not evil all the days of her life. . . . Strength and dignity are her clothing, and she laughs at the time to come. She openeth her mouth with wisdom, and the law of kindness is on her tongue. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness. Her children rise up and call her blessed, her husband also, and he praiseth her."

We shall have to pass the other books of the division of Holy Writings. One is greatly tempted to enter into a discussion of the problem of the suffering of the good and the blessedness of the wicked, and that of reward and punishment in the Book of Job. This work has been universally recognized as one of the world's classic masterpieces. It does not solve the

question, but it presents it in a fashion that is most refreshing and thought provoking. Job is tested, he refuses to give up his faith in the justice of God, tho sometimes he questions it; he stands by his own record of righteousness, and in the end he is rewarded. His health, his family and his goods are restored to him—and Job remains the man of God, just, faithful to His statutes, and devoted to the truth. It is what we would call a book on religious philosophy—attempting to answer the question “why do the righteous suffer?” The answer in the book is that suffering does not necessarily follow from sin, but might be a test of one’s righteousness, and he who meets that test is the more firmly established in his faith. God, the Creator of the Universe, is not “solely a dispenser of rewards and punishments,” and though man receives the lot of suffering, he may, in spite of it, love God for His own sake, and thus receive spiritual contentment.

Space prevents the discussion of such books as Ecclesiastes, Ruth, Lamentations, Esther, etcetera. The reader, if he is interested, may consult any of the larger number of fine commentaries that have been published on all of them.

The rareness of the use of the word “Jew” or “Jewish” might be noted in this discussion. This is due to the fact that until the destruction of Jerusalem in 586, the word “Hebrew” was applied to our ancestors. The word “Jew” and its derivatives, Jewish and Judaism, became current during the Exile, and were not used earlier, tho the word “Jehudi” and its derivatives do occur in the Bible.

C

THE BIBLE AS LITERATURE

CHAPTER IX

BIBLICAL LITERARY FORMS AND USAGES

PROFESSOR RICHARD G. MOULTON, one of the world's greatest authorities on the Bible as Literature, divided the general study of the Bible, into three kinds: The first was that of Theology, or the Religion of the Bible; the second was the study of History as exhibited in the Bible; and the third was that which he pioneered and developed so highly, namely, the Literary Study of the Bible. By the latter is meant the analysis of the Biblical writings into the various literary forms, such as prose, drama, poetry, songs, history, stories, philosophic writings, and so forth; the analysis of these forms into various types such as lyric, parable, idyl, fable, assonance, parallelism, etc. Moulton arranged a number of compositions antiphonally, that is, in a manner in which one reader reads one verse, and he is answered by another reading a responsive verse. It is what we know now as "alternate or responsive reading or chanting," and this arrangement clarified many passages otherwise not clear.

While the Bible is primarily a source of religious inspiration, it has in our days become the object of a great deal of literary study. It represents the literary treasure of a people that has surely left something behind it. It is rich in the possession of contents that pre-

sent a variety of materials and points of view. It is full of unique experiences uniquely told. It is the record of a long succession of writers who consciously or unconsciously utilized those literary frames which serve even now as instruments of finer expression. The Bible is an astonishing treasury of literary jewels, esthetically satisfying to those who have an appreciation of the finer values of literary study.

It is said by students of Hebrew Philology, that only thru a laborious process of adaptation, was the language of our ancestors able to accommodate itself to being put into the art of giving utterance to the passions, aspirations, ideals and fancies of the people. This applies to all ancients, but particularly true is it of that branch of the Semitic peoples which used the Hebrew language, because it was believed that this was a language of the senses rather than of the poetical and artistic imagination. That is to say, that Hebrew originally expressed the concrete and the simple things,—the material movements or actions which struck the senses or excited the emotions. Latterly it developed into a language of metaphor and simile—into a tongue in which metaphysical and abstract ideas could be expressed. And even this did not go to the extent of ancient Greek. In Hebrew, as in other Oriental languages, there is a predominance of gutturals and the harder consonants, and these were made use of in the rhetorical structure. It was a language, say the critics, that was fitted for the early rugged and warlike life of the Hebrews, and only later, moulded itself into its grand poetry and beautiful prose. The words themselves were simple—there being very few, if any

compound words. Even the word "tzal-maveth," which in my student days used to be known as a compound word meaning shadow of death, has latterly been changed to tzalmuth—shadow or darkening, and made into a single word; so that George Adam Smith makes the statement that there are no compound words in the Hebrew. At any rate, because of the word structure, it was not rhyme that determined Hebrew poetry, but rhythm, assonance and parallelism. And it was not the metaphysical turn of mind that found itself dressed in Hebrew words, but the simple experiences and reflections of their everyday life. The finest passages of the Bible, with a few exceptions, are its latest, and the earliest narratives are its simplest—tho, here and there, one finds a poetic fragment that gives evidence of earlier creation, as the Song of Deborah.

Let us proceed to a closer study of the sources, and mention first some of the interesting, beautiful but simple narrative prose as exhibited in the stories of Genesis, the books of Samuel and parts of Kings. It was of the story of Joseph that Tolstoy said, "It was the model of what story telling should be"—and it was of the other stories of the patriarchs that Goethe said that their writers were masters of their art. The stories are full of human interest and are told in a way that makes their principals live again today as they did when they were written. With a language that is simple, precise, effective; with pictures that bring to mind the civilization and the thoughts of the ancients, their moralities, their foibles and their weaknesses, one, in reading these narratives lives over again the rustic

life of the ancient, and is touched by the faith, the integrity and the confidence that these had as they trod thru the unfolding years. Take for instance, the story of Joseph. Happy in his father's love for him—one of the youngest of a large family and motherless, tender and affectionate—as might be supposed, he was utterly naive, and quite unmindful of the fact that the very love that his father bore him was the germ out of which grew his brothers' hate; too unsophisticated to see that his dreams only embitter those to whom he tells them; too untutored to see that when he tells them the dreams in which his own superiority is symbolized, he but increases their passion against him, and furnishes them with the motive that later leads to his own apparent undoing. He is sold to the Ishmaelites—or if you prefer, Midianites, gets employment by Potiphar, then is the victim of a little flirtation on the part of Potiphar's wife—resulting disastrously for our hero; his incarceration and the bit of good-luck in meeting the head steward and the head baker, and his consequent hoped-for liberation, result. The story of the famine and the appearance of Joseph's brothers, follows; and in this tale and in the disclosure of Joseph, the story reaches its heights. I know of nothing in literature that equals it—either in its pull upon the emotions, or in the vividness with which it is told, or the beautiful simplicity of the wording, or the effective but every-day imagery employed. And when Joseph tells his brethren that they must not fear, that he was sold in order to be a “michya,” a preserver for them thru the providence of God, the climax is reached, and the story forms a complete circle in the

adventure of this hero. And the Hebrew is pure and chaste and beautiful—emphatic in its simplicity and overwhelming in its picturesqueness. For the full story read Chapters 42-45 in Genesis.

Similarly effective is the narrative prose in that gripping story in which David the King is guilty of the murder of the man whose wife he loved. Without embellishment, without circumlocution, without that oriental superfluity that usually characterizes the speech of the commoner to the King, Nathan the Prophet relates the story of the rich man and the poor man; how the rich man deprived the poor one of his only lamb, whereas he had countless lambs; how the poor man had nothing—save one little ewe lamb which he had brought up and nourished; how it grew up together with him and his children; how it did eat of his own morsel and drank out of his own cup and how it lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And when the King says "the man who hath done this deserveth to die," Nathan points his finger at the King and says, "Thou art the man." Simple and direct, but yet so emphatic that it strikes us even to-day with a tremendous force. These are not only simple stories; they not only tell us interesting events in lives of these men, but they impress upon our minds moral and religious truths—in the one, the love for parents and brothers, and the loftiness of repaying evil with good; in the other, the immorality and the barbarity of a passion that disregards right, abuses confidence and commits injustices at will. Such a one cannot escape the penalty incurred by his folly. II Samuel, 12:1-12.

The other type of prose is that simple historical narrative as found in parts of the Five Books, in Joshua and Judges and in the other historical books. Here there is the simple narration of historical events that occurred, sometimes the wanderings in the Desert—sometimes the story of a plague, sometimes the incident such as the striking of the rock, or the falling of manna, and others; here we have the description of the taking of a city—here the meeting of a king with the prophet, here the tale of conspiracy, and there a number of various events and incidents in the life of the people.

Unlike this style of writing is that of the hortatory sections of Deuteronomy: The fervent exhortations that the commands which have been given, be written upon the hearts, be taught to the children, and be carved on pillar and gate; and the warnings that Israel choose God and His ways—the way of life, not death, good not evil, so that they and their seed may live. For an example of this book's hortatory exposition read Chapter 30—vs. 11-20: "For this commandment which I command thee this day is not too hard for thee, nor is it far off. It is not in heaven that thou shouldst say: "Who shall go for us to heaven and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it? Neither is it beyond the sea, that thou shouldst say: "Who will go over the sea for us; and bring it unto us, and make us to hear it, that we may do it?" But the word is very nigh unto thee; it is in thy mouth and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it. See, I have set before thee this day life and good, death and evil, in that I command thee this day to love

the Lord thy God, to walk in His ways, and to keep His statutes and His ordinances; then shalt thou live and multiply, and the Lord thy God shall bless thee in the land whither thou goest to possess it." . . . "I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day that I have set before thee life and death, the blessing and the curse; therefore choose life, that thou mayest live, thou and thy seed."

In the historical books, particularly in Kings and Chronicles, and more especially in Chronicles, we find also a type of hortatory prose which is very effective. In this instance, Second Chronicles, Chapter 13, the writer records the fact that a war was begun between Jeroboam and Abijah. It seemed that it was an unjust one. And Abijah gets upon a mount and he talks with the men of Israel—tells them that they are wrong, and pleads that the war is unjust. He enlarges upon the wrongs of the Northern Kingdom, upon their impieties and blasphemies. He pleads with his people that they fight for their God—and soon the shout of victory is heard from the army of Abijah.

Another type of prose is the lyric. It is really prose-poetry. It is poetry in the sense that it does not deal with the ordinary ways of expression, the common things, and the simple imagery that prose deals with. It is poetry—not necessarily verse, in its rhythmic expression of ideas and in its word-pictures which give an added value to what the writer wants to say. The writer uses his imaginative faculties, and thru this usage, he creates and adds something beyond the mere objects about which he speaks. He is a poet in the sense of being a creator—a poet, in the sense of the

Greek meaning of the word, creator. He is a poet in the way he treats the subjects or persons he mentions—giving new word meanings, and new word combinations, and working up historical incidents in a way that brings forth a new appeal. Prose utilizes matter-of-fact incidents and puts them in a matter-of-fact way. Poetry may utilize the same incidents but it sublimates them in language and with imagery that evoke nobler passions and arouse deeper emotions. In this sense, a number of the Biblical books are poetry—lyric productions of the finest kind.

To this category of literary production belong many of the fine passages of the prophets. One of the very finest examples of this kind of prose-poem is the 19th chapter of Isaiah:

Behold, the Lord rideth upon the swift cloud, and
cometh into Egypt;
And the idols of Egypt shall be moved at his presence,
and the heart of Egypt shall melt within it.

.

And the waters shall fail from the sea, and the rivers
shall become foul, the streams of Egypt
shall be diminished and dried up.
The reeds and flags shall wither. The mosses by the
Nile, by the brink of the Nile,
Shall become dry, be driven away, and be no more.
The fishers also shall lament, and all they that cast
angle into the Nile shall mourn,
And they that spread nets upon the waters shall
languish.

Neither shall there be for Egypt any work,
Which head or tail, palm branch or rush, may do.

Another magnificent example of this kind of poetry is from Joel, Chapter 3:

And it shall come to pass afterward, that I will
pour out My spirit upon all flesh:

And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy.
Your old men shall dream dreams, and your young
men shall see visions;

And also upon the servants and upon the hand-
maids, in those days, will I pour out My
spirit.

And I will show wonders in the heavens and in
the earth.

Blood and fire, and pillars of smoke.

The sun shall be turned into darkness, and the
moon into blood,

Before the great and terrible day of the Lord,
come.

The Book of Job is a great poem, in addition to being a drama. The narrative parts are written in prose, the speeches in poetry. I need not enter here into the problem of Job—that of reward and punishment. I am concerned only with its literary structure. The Book of Job, with regard to its content, is classed under the Wisdom Literature, but it is in its dramatic form that it expresses the varying observations and theories of its *dramatis personae*. The trial of the patriarch was due to a challenge that

Satan issued to God, maintaining that as long as the Almighty blessed Job so richly, so long would he be faithful; but let Him deprive him of his wealth, and see how soon he will curse his Maker. But Job was steadfast, saying only, after he was deprived of all of his wealth and his children:

“Naked came I out of my mother’s womb,
And naked shall I return thither;
The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away,
Blessed be the Name of the Lord.”

The Adversary then challenges God to afflict Job with bodily disease, and see whether he then will not curse him. The Lord turns Job over to Satan, “who smote Job with sore boils from the sole of his foot even unto his crown.” Job took a potsherd with which to scratch himself, and sat upon a pile of ashes. But he did not curse God. Then said his wife: “Dost thou still hold fast thine integrity? Blaspheme God and die.” But Job replied: “Thou speakest as one of the impious women. Shall we receive the good from the Lord and not receive the evil?”

Job resists all temptation to turn against his Maker, and the Bible thus comments on this, in the simple but effective language: “For all this Job did not sin with his lips.” His friends then hear of his plight, and the body of the book follows.

The literary form of Job is that of a drama—and it has been called the greatest dramatic poem of literature. Besides Job, there are his three friends who have come to comfort him, but with whose philosophy he

disagrees entirely. The dialogue back and forth represents some of the finest poetry in the Old Testament. The fifth character, apparently a youth, also breaks in, and expresses sentiments that disagree with both of those expressed by Job and his friends. The dramatic tension is sustained by the different moods into which Job is thrown by the accusations and implications of his friends; and the literary excellence of the work is maintained thruout the poem.

The Book of Ecclesiastes, which is one of the Wisdom books, is composed of epigrams, proverbs and groups of thought—even small essays. But they are connected by the same general thought. The literary structure of the Book approaches that of a number of very short compositions—and like Job, with a prologue and an epilogue. It is the record of alleged experiences, with analyses of these experiences and other aspects of life. Here, we have wise sayings and reflections upon the uselessness of human endeavor, the vanity of existence, and the ills of human folk—expressed by formulas, like “eat and drink” which means really to appreciate that particular theme with which the phrase happens to deal. Ecclesiastes is written in an expository prose with poetry intermingled, in which a certain type of uniformity or style of expression takes on alliterative or rhythmic form, as in Chapters 2, 3, 7 and others.

The Book of Proverbs is written in the style of the ancient gnomics—of Proverb literature. There is no continuous discussion of the matter presented, but there is a succession of proverbs, epigrams, sayings, and here and there, very short essays. These are thrown to-

gether without any definite plan, but their form is poetic and the parrallelism of the members is observed. For examples, read Chapters 1, 3, 10, 12 and 31.

Many of the choicest productions of the Bible are written in lyric poetry. This type of poetry is made up of songs, sonnets, elegies, odes, meditations and sometimes monologues. It is poetic meditation, and sometimes the poet speaks for himself, now for others represented in his productions, now for both. Lyric poetry is associated with dance and musical accompaniment, and with the movement of the body as well. Its outward dress is rhythm or assonance, and with these modes they gave expression to whatever movement they desired to portray. It must not be forgotten that the poets of Israel had little or no rhyme—no more than the other ancient nations had, but assonance, rhythm and parallelism were greatly aided by the long vowels and the double consonants which characterize the Hebrew language. Rhythmical balancing of parts and parallelism of thought are the distinctive characteristics of Hebrew poetry. But the balancing of the parts depends upon the accents or accented syllables. Using these basic forms of structure, there are in the Old Testament poetic productions, examples of acrostics, didactic poems, lyrics, dramas, songs, odes, rhapsodies, dirges and sonnets.

Let me hasten to present some of the poetry of the Bible as it exhibits itself in the various books. In the acrostic form, the letters of the alphabet stand in their order at the beginning of each verse or line as in Lamentations, Psalms 25, 34, 37, 111, 112, 119. The last is the finest example. There is a large number of

didactic poems; and examples of these are portions of Proverbs, Chapter 31, Psalms 5 and 18, 19 and others. Examples of lyrics abound in the Book of Psalms, while the song of the Deliverance from the Red Sea, Chapter 15 of Exodus is a complete ode. Of dramas, the Book of Job and the Song of Songs are the best examples. The dirge is a form of lyric poetry, and shows itself in the mourning of David over the death of Jonathan, II Samuel I, and in the Book of Lamentations. One of the finest examples of lyric monologue is the well-known 23rd Psalm. A magnificent example of the didactic Psalm is 139; and I present 137 as a fine example of the lyric dirge.

Let me say a word about the most famous of the longer songs of the Scripture—one that is so widely read in the home and synagogue—and is interpreted spiritually; the one that also receives the condemnation of every scoffer of the Bible. I refer of course, to the Song of Songs—or the Song of Solomon. It is called by some a lyric idyl, by others, a dramatic or a pastoral poem. It has been regarded as the finest love song of literature. It is a dialogue in which King Solomon woos the Shulammite maiden, and tho he offers her the splendor that goes with his station, she prefers her shepherd lover, and spurns the royal offer. The language of the Song is expressive of the passionate love of the Oriental, and is not, as has been alleged by critics of the poem, an exposition of flagrant lewdness. Besides the lovers, there is a chorus of the Daughters of Jerusalem, which has parts assigned to it in the poem.

Not so well known is the great dirge of Kinoth—

the Lamentations, supposed to have been written by the Prophet Jeremiah on the destruction of Jerusalem, but really the work of some later authors, with the exceptions of chapters two and four which critics think, are the prophet's. The composition was probably written very soon after the first destruction of Jerusalem. The foremost of the Bible critics maintain that the Lamentations are studied and carefully elaborated poems in which woe and grief and sorrow are brought together to complete the picture of utter ruin, desolation and destruction. Because of its unusual style, I want to say something about its literary construction. Let me quote from Professor Driver: "The verse itself, in Lamentations, may consist of one or more members—but each member which contains on an average of not more than five or six words is divided by a caesura"—that is a break commonly occurring in the middle of a verse—"into two unequal parts, the first being longer than the second part of the verse—and the second very often being not parallel to the first. The rhythm becomes apparent even in our translations, and is exceedingly effective for the kinoth or dirge style of rhetoric." The first four Chapters are also written in acrostics. Chapter 2 is particularly touching.

I shall follow Moulton in the contention that Prophecy can rightly be called a branch of literature. The writings of the prophets represent, in literary form, the messages that these teachers uttered, and these messages were clothed in whatever form conveyed their meaning best. It is probable that some of the writings that have come down to us were handed

down to the disciples of the prophets, in writing. We know that Baruch, for instance, acted in the capacity of literary secretary for Jeremiah. The prophets of Israel have been called poets—not because they were mouthpieces of their God, but because, what they gave were new and artistic literary creations, even as Milton created out of legend the poems *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. They are poets, because they use “visions and imaginative dramas, as a vehicle in which they bring home to man’s highest faculties, the providential mysteries with which they feel themselves inspired.”

Prophecy then is not so much a literary form, as a branch of literature. In it the content varies from lyric poem to a dramatic incident, from a proverb to a narrative discourse, from a song to a dirge. But thru all these forms runs the unity of thought that the prophet wishes to express—the burden entrusted to him by his Creator and Caller. Our attention is called to three forms of literature found mostly in prophecy and generally not used in literature in our day.

The first is the doom song, which is a denunciation of Israel’s enemies and a prophecy of their destruction. Examples of this, one finds in the Books of Nahum or Obadiah.

The second form of prophetic literature which does not occur to the same extent in other writings, is the rhapsodical. The works of Providence are here brought to us in lyric outbursts of imaginative description, often in realistic dramatic form. Moulton calls these rhapsodies, “spiritual drama.” The nearest

approach to it in modern art he says, is the oratorio or sacred cantata. The rhapsodies may use all forms of literature from narrative description to lyric poetry—but the effect is highly realistic and dramatic. To this type of literary art belongs most of the last 26 chapters of Isaiah. The simplest example of such rhapsody is the Prophecy of Habakkuk. The book of Zephaniah is similarly a rhapsody.

The third element is the emblematic or symbolic prophecy of Ezekiel, who developed this type of preaching to a higher degree than any of the other prophets. He utilized some article of everyday use—or some figure that was familiar to everybody, or some phenomenon that was well-known, and these symbolized for him the lessons that he wished to present. Eating his bread and drinking his water with quaking, illustrated the horrors and famine of a siege; here a tile used as a symbol, here a sword, here the picture of a valley of dry bones. The vision of Jerusalem in its glory, is itself a symbol of the future rebuilding of the Holy Jerusalem in its glory. Chapters 4, 5, 12, 21, and 37 represent this kind of literary mechanism.

I cannot close without calling to your attention a few passages from the prophets which are among the finest examples of ethical exhortation that we have. The beauty of their diction, the force of their expression, the power of their symbolism and the exaltedness of their ethical instruction account for their hold upon the human heart. Combining as these passages do, beauty, rhythm, ruggedness of diction, ethical idealism and fervent devotion, we may not wonder

why we find among them what have been called the most priceless treasures of the human heart. Expressions of the human mind like those of Amos, Chapter 8, verses 4-8; Hosea 2, verses 18 and on; Isaiah 1, verses 10-20 and Chapter 2, verses 2-9; Jeremiah 9, verses 22 and on; Micah 4, verses 1-4 and Chapter 6, verses 6-8, and many others, some of which have already been referred to, will never be thrown out of the annals of human achievement.

FINIS

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NOTE—B.C.E., *Before Christian Era*; A.C.E., *After Christian Era*;
c, *About*.

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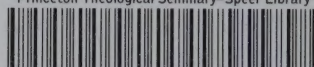
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